

AMERICAN JOBS PLAN

Question: Please describe EPA’s proposals for resilient infrastructure included in the American Jobs Plan and FY22 budget request, including how these proposals will benefit infrastructure throughout the country—not just in states along the coasts.

Answer: The American Jobs Plan is an investment in America that will create millions of good jobs and rebuild our country’s infrastructure. In the American Jobs Plan, President Biden committed to “deliver infrastructure Americans can trust, because it will be resilient to floods, fires, storms, and other threats, and not fragile in the face of these increasing risks.” These are impacts that are already affecting Americans in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. He also wrote: “Building back better requires that the investments in this historic plan make our infrastructure more resilient in the face of increasingly severe floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and other risks. Every dollar spent on rebuilding our infrastructure during the Biden administration will be used to prevent, reduce, and withstand the impacts of the climate crisis.”

The American Jobs Plan includes an \$111 billion investment to rebuild the nation’s aging water infrastructure, which is vulnerable to the full range of climate impacts. The investments aim to replace 100 percent of the nation’s lead pipes and service lines, upgrade and modernize drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, tackle new contaminants, and support water infrastructure and resiliency across rural America.

The FY 2022 President’s Budget requests a total of \$3.56 billion for several of EPA’s water infrastructure programs that include the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), Alaska Native Villages, and Mexico Border. The EPA also supports water infrastructure through grants authorized under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act and America’s Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA). This increased federal investment paired with EPA’s technical assistance and training programs help to ensure that all communities, especially small and underserved communities, have available tools to help address their pressing water infrastructure and other water quality needs.

The FY 2022 President’s Budget also requests a total of \$1.53 billion for EPA’s Superfund Program of which approximately \$1.1 billion is specifically for the Superfund Remedial, Removal and Emergency Response programs. EPA also requests \$140 million for the Brownfields Project program to assess and clean up contaminated properties in communities and return these idle sites to communities for economic and environmental revitalization. Hurricanes and extreme precipitation events—the hallmarks of climate change—can flood these contaminated properties and toxic waste sites and spread pollution throughout neighborhoods, making expedited cleanup of these sites critical in the face of a warming climate.

Together, the American Jobs Plan and the FY 2022 President’s Budget enable EPA to significantly expand its effort to fund, partner with and build the capacity of local utilities, private investors, and state programs to expand the array of funding options to meet future infrastructure needs that improve resiliency, reduce exposure to contaminants, address vulnerabilities, including cyber-related issues, and increase water workforce and system capacity.

CARBON CAPTURE, UTILIZATION AND STORAGE (CCUS)

Question: We've been working to crack the code on CCUS because accelerating the deployment of carbon capture technology is the single most effective thing we can do to lower emissions, while keeping the lights on for families and our economy.

We appreciate the administration's work to prioritize CCUS, including the inclusion of our bipartisan proposals to enhance the 45Q credit for CCUS as well as the SCALE Act, which supports the buildout of necessary infrastructure, including pipelines, to transport and store CO₂.

- Do you support the buildout of new CO₂ pipelines?
- Do you agree that we need more predictable and transparent regulations to build this needed infrastructure?
- Do support new infrastructure and technology to capture natural gas and prevent flaring?
 - Does this include supporting new pipeline infrastructure to gather and transport natural gas, and reduce methane emissions?
- Last year, we worked with the Trump administration to improve and modernize the NEPA review process. At a minimum, do you agree that project developers should have more predictable timelines and that participating agencies should face?

Answer: In line with the bipartisan SCALE Act, the Administration supports large-scale sequestration efforts that leverage the best science and prioritize community engagement. To accelerate responsible carbon capture deployment and ensure permanent storage, the President's plan reforms and expands the bipartisan Section 45Q tax credit, making it direct pay and easier to use for hard-to-decarbonize industrial applications, direct air capture, and retrofits of existing power plants.

As directed by Executive Order 13990, EPA is reviewing the final rule titled "Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources Reconsideration." In reviewing the rule, EPA is considering how states have addressed methane emissions at oil and gas operations and new technologies to capture methane. EPA has opened a public docket for pre-proposal comments and plans to convene listening sessions for stakeholders.

Consistent with Executive Order 13990, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is reviewing regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that the regulations effectively implement NEPA and serve its multiple purposes. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and CEQ also are tasked with jointly considering whether to recommend a replacement to the revoked Executive Order 13807, Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects. EPA stands ready to support CEQ and OMB as needed and will provide advice based on EPA's experience in independently reviewing all federal agencies' environmental impact statements and as a permitting agency.

COAL-FIRED GENERATION

Question: Coal-fired generation provided over 50 percent of the power to the two regional grids in North Dakota (SPP & MISO) during February's extreme cold weather. This demonstrates that the administration's goal for the power sector by 2035 is not feasible without the mass deployment of CCUS.

Further, China added 38 gigawatts of new coal-fired power in 2020 and has another 247 gigawatts of coal power under development.

- As developing economies continue to invest in new coal-fired generation, wouldn't you agree that CCUS technology is critical to any global emissions reduction solution?

Answer: It's critical that we look at all the tools in the toolbox with regard to climate mitigation. To accelerate responsible carbon capture deployment and ensure permanent storage, President Biden's plan reforms and expands the bipartisan Section 45Q tax credit, making it direct pay and easier to use for hard-to-decarbonize industrial applications, direct air capture, and retrofits of existing power plants. The administration also supports large-scale sequestration efforts that leverage the best science and prioritize community engagement, in line with the bipartisan SCALE Act, all while ensuring that overburdened communities are protected from increases in cumulative pollution. To the extent that the United States can be among the first movers on climate mitigation, we have an opportunity to responsibly develop these types of technologies through American ingenuity and export them to other countries.

NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is no longer limited to our bridges, roads, and railways. Vermonters understand the importance of conserving our most natural infrastructure, from farmland to watersheds. Doing so is not just an environmental imperative in rural states like Vermont – it is an economic one.

Question: How can EPA, in coordination with other agencies, accelerate the conservation and restoration of natural infrastructure such as wetlands, marshes, riparian areas, and intact watersheds that are so critical for resilience to the impacts of climate change?

Answer: EPA works collaboratively with other federal agencies across numerous programs that leverage resources and authorities to prioritize the conservation and restoration of natural infrastructure. These include our geographic programs, nonpoint source program, coastal wetlands initiative, and the Urban Waters program.

In Vermont, where nonpoint source and stormwater pollution have caused overland runoff, including in the Lake Champlain Basin, EPA has funded green infrastructure best management practices. For example, the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain used EPA funding to install rain gardens and other practices at the Bellows Free Academy in Fairfax, Alburgh Community Education Center, and the Georgia Elementary and Middle School. The Georgia Elementary and Middle School will educate kids about the benefits of green infrastructure as part of their STEM programming. EPA is supporting another project to control erosion issues at the Highgate Dam by deploying best management practices along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail on the Missisquoi River to manage stormwater runoff.

Question: Harmful algae blooms are accelerating rapidly, as the result of warmer temperatures and more severe rainfall events. What will the EPA do to assist geographic area and estuary programs, as well as wastewater and storm water infrastructure, with the funding and technical supported needed to accelerate their work and offset these impacts?

Answer: EPA is actively involved with efforts aimed at preventing and mitigating harmful algal blooms (HABs) in freshwater systems and estuaries. EPA conducts research to understand the causal agents for HABs and continues to provide technical support to assist states and tribes in the development of numeric nutrient criteria to control discharges of nitrogen and phosphorus. EPA will continue to support states in implementing their water quality standards, including states' efforts to develop HABs-related criteria, identify waters impaired for HABs, develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) to address HABs impairments, and include information on impairments, TMDLs, and other plans in the How's My Waterway online tool.

EPA also provides support and technical assistance to states and tribes challenged with cyanotoxins in their source waters. EPA has offered monitoring, analysis, and risk communication strategies and direct monitoring and laboratory analysis support during HABs events. EPA supports the cyanobacteria monitoring network (<https://cyanos.org/>), available nationally, to assist states, tribes, and communities in identifying HABs. Further, EPA has developed several tools and

resources for states, tribes, and communities to use to protect public health during cyanobacterial HABs in drinking and recreational waters.

Investments included in the American Jobs Plan will also assist in rebuilding our nation's infrastructure and addressing harmful algal blooms and other environmental and public health needs. The American Jobs Plan provides \$111 billion, primarily in grants and low-cost flexible loans to states, Tribes, territories, and disadvantaged communities across the country to upgrade and modernize America's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, tackle new contaminants, and support clean water infrastructure across rural America

RURAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Like many rural states, Vermont's aging water infrastructure requires significant investment. According to an annual report card by the American Society of Civil Engineers, Vermont's drinking water infrastructure remains at a C-minus grade, with storm water and wastewater infrastructure even further behind. The situation is even more urgent for low-income rural populations, which are especially burdened by the high costs of replacing aging assets, addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS, understaffed water systems, and an increase in extreme weather due to climate change. I have worked hard to secure federal funds for Vermont to close this gap, replace our aging systems, and increase community resilience, but much more work remains. As we work to increase funding for critical infrastructure upgrades, low-resource communities still lack the technical and financial capacity to secure funding and implement projects.

Question: What role can technical assistance play in supporting these communities, particularly those with smaller, decentralized water and wastewater systems?

Answer: EPA's technical assistance and training programs help to ensure that all communities, especially small and underserved communities, have the tools they need to address their pressing water infrastructure and other water quality needs. In addition, EPA provides training and technical assistance to small and rural wastewater and drinking water systems to improve their operation and management practices and promote sustainability. Examples of EPA technical assistance and training programs that help rural communities include the Small System Technical Assistance for Drinking Water and Wastewater Grant and the New Technical Assistance for Small Wastewater Systems Grant.

The American Jobs Plan includes additional critical investments that will help to modernize small and rural water systems. The Plan will scale up existing, successful programs, including by providing \$56 billion in grants and low-cost flexible loans to states, Tribes, territories, and disadvantaged communities across the country. The Plan also provides \$10 billion in funding to monitor and remediate PFAS in drinking water and to invest in rural small water systems and household well and wastewater systems, including drainage fields.

WOODSTOVES

I applaud EPA's implementation of much higher emissions standards for residential wood heaters, spurring the emergence of a new generation of highly-efficient devices to the marketplace. These advances in efficiency over the last decade have helped heating devices like pellet stoves and boilers achieve efficiency ratings over 80 percent. Deploying these new wood heaters can help states like Vermont achieve carbon reduction goals and improve air quality in rural communities while providing local, renewable, and relatively low-cost fuel. At the same time, old, dirty, and inefficient wood heaters abound. They are also highly durable, and without a concerted federal effort to remove them from the market, they could remain in circulation in perpetuity.

Question: What is the value in expanding federal support for the buy-back/removal from market of old, non-compliant, residential wood heaters? What can EPA do to initiate this type of effort?

Answer: Smoke from wood burning contains fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and other air pollutants, which may result in outdoor air concentrations exceeding federal air quality standards and harming public health. EPA is actively working to improve testing and certification to ensure that changing out old, inefficient wood burning devices remains an important tool to reduce particle pollution in communities that use wood for heat.

Expanded resources would afford EPA the ability to undertake and accelerate a multi-year project to develop improved Clean Air Act compliance measurement methods for testing new woodstoves. These methods would better reflect real-world conditions and additional funding would allow EPA to deploy them sooner.

Through EPA's Burn Wise program, the Agency is working with recipients of Targeted Airshed Grant funds and other state, local, and tribal programs to implement woodstove changeouts. Burn Wise also collaborates with communities, industry, and other stakeholders to educate wood burning residents on how to achieve efficient fires that maximize heat and minimize smoke.

RURAL VILLAGES AND TOWNS

The average town in Vermont has 1,200 people and leadership that is almost all volunteers with full time jobs. These towns are ready to make the investments to update their water, their sewer, their roads, and their zoning and build more housing, and attract young families and new small businesses. But, doing so is a bureaucratic maze. The American Jobs Plan is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for every part of our country.

Question: How can the EPA support rural places and small towns in this infrastructure plan? How can we ensure that this funding benefits everyone in the country, not just cities that have already been able to invest in the requirements for shovel-ready projects?

Answer: The American Jobs Plan specifically commits to upgrade and modernize America's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, tackle new contaminants, and support clean water infrastructure across rural America. Specifically, the American Jobs Plan provides funding to rural communities through several EPA programs, including the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. These programs provide low-cost, flexible loans and loan forgiveness. In addition, EPA provides training and technical assistance to small and rural wastewater and drinking water systems through programs like the Small System Technical Assistance for Drinking Water and Wastewater Grant Program and a new Technical Assistance for Small Wastewater Systems Grant Program. The American Jobs Plan investment in these grant programs will help to rebuild the Nation's water infrastructure, including infrastructure needs and assistance for rural and disadvantaged communities and tribal nations.

CLEAN SCHOOL BUS REBATE PROGRAM

President Biden's American Jobs Plan includes an initiative to electrify at least 20 percent of our school bus fleet through a new Clean Buses for Kids Program at the EPA. Initiatives like this are critical to meeting our national emissions reductions goals and ensuring cleaner air for our children and communities, particularly in rural areas where bus routes are longer. The EPA's existing School Bus Rebate program has served as a model for this important work. In recent years, however, only two Vermont school districts have secured rebates through this program, out of hundreds of awards.

Question: As we scale up this program, how do we ensure equitable distribution to smaller and more rural communities, for which these upgrades are particularly important?

Answer: The Clean Buses for Kids Program in the American Jobs Plan will build on the successes and lessons learned from the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Program. EPA's DERA School Bus Rebate program, most recently authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, provides rebates to eligible applicants through a lottery process. This popular program is consistently oversubscribed on an annual basis, resulting in most applications going unfunded. The new Clean Buses for Kids Program will create more opportunities for EPA to meet the needs of schools, including those in smaller and more rural states.

Already, EPA has taken steps to achieve a greater geographic distribution of school bus rebate awards. For example, the agency updated its selection process in 2018 to ensure that at least one applicant from each state submitting an eligible application is selected for funding. Moving forward, EPA will continue to explore options to ensure clean school buses are available across the country, including in rural areas. The agency will also continue to improve outreach and educational efforts so that more communities, including smaller towns and rural areas, are aware of our funding opportunities.

EPA will follow congressional direction in how to allocate funding for the new Clean Buses for Kids Program.

WILDFIRES

Thank you for committing to work to address the ongoing needs of Oregon and other western states who are struggling to recover from the damage of the 2020 wildfire season. While FEMA has delivered substantial emergency relief to Oregon, I believe the scale of natural disasters in Oregon and other western states demands additional resources that can only be delivered through disaster supplemental legislation.

Question: I greatly appreciated that you highlighted the impact that wildfire smoke has on air quality and public health in your testimony. Could you elaborate and expand on the specific impact that wildfire smoke has on air quality and public health?

Answer:

Smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic materials burn. The biggest health threat from smoke is from fine particles. These microscopic particles can get into a person's eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause a variety of health problems. Short-term exposures to particles (hours or days) can cause symptoms such as burning eyes or runny nose, and can also aggravate lung disease, causing asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and may also increase susceptibility to respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposures have been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias. Long-term exposures, experienced by people living for many years in areas with high particle levels, have been associated with reduced lung function, development of chronic bronchitis, and even premature death.

In addition, to impacts on ambient air quality, wildfire smoke can enter homes and buildings, exposing people advised to stay indoors during wildfire smoke events. The extent to which smoke infiltrates into buildings depends on a number of factors including the leakiness of the building, whether doors and windows can be kept closed, whether outdoor air is brought in via mechanical ventilation systems, and whether that air is filtered.

EPA has developed information for people to reduce their exposure to smoke at home, which can be found on our [Wildfires and Indoor Air Quality webpage](#). For commercial buildings and other similar building types such as schools, EPA representatives participated in the development of American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineer's (ASHRAE) [Planning Framework for Protecting Commercial Building Occupants from Smoke During Wildfire Events](#).

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE FROM 2020 WILDFIRES

Thank you for committing to work to address the ongoing needs of Oregon and other western states who are struggling to recover from the damage of the 2020 wildfire season. While FEMA has delivered substantial emergency relief to Oregon, I believe the scale of natural disasters in Oregon and other western states demands additional resources that can only be delivered through disaster supplemental legislation.

Question: What does the Agency estimate the damage to water infrastructure from 2020 wildfires was?

Answer: There were five Major Disaster Declarations for wildfires occurring in 2020. Damage includes, but is not limited to, damaged infrastructure (tanks, pipes, pumps, electrical, etc.), erosion of berms, and active emergency protective measures (e.g. preventing or purging sewage leakage into public water supply). According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance database, the declarations and estimated damages are as follows:

- DR-4558 California: Approximately \$26.5 million
- DR-4562 Oregon: Approximately \$5.8 million
- DR-4569 California: Approximately \$3.0 million
- DR-4581 Colorado: Approximately \$0.0 (\$0.01 million) several close calls
- DR-4584 Washington: Approximately \$0.0 (no water/wastewater utilities claimed damage to FEMA)

Actual estimates are likely higher as additional claims of damage are expected from water and wastewater utilities and not all damage is obvious until reconstruction begins. For example, there can be contamination of underground pipelines from thermal exposure, which might require pipeline replacement. The estimates also may not include costs for water systems to provide additional or alternative treatment due to changes in source water quality (e.g. increased sediment loading and heavy metals) from the wildfires. In addition, FEMA's Public Assistance program only covers certain eligible costs for public utilities (e.g., labor, equipment, materials, contract work, direct and indirect administrative costs) and does not cover the thousands of private utilities or private wells that were damaged.

AGENCY PLANNING – WILDFIRE SMOKE

Thank you for committing to work to address the ongoing needs of Oregon and other western states who are struggling to recover from the damage of the 2020 wildfire season. While FEMA has delivered substantial emergency relief to Oregon, I believe the scale of natural disasters in Oregon and other western states demands additional resources that can only be delivered through disaster supplemental legislation.

Question: It is widely anticipated that 2021 will be another difficult fire season. How is the Agency preparing for upcoming wildfire season? In your answer, please address how the Agency is planning for wildfire smoke.

Answer: EPA will continue to provide the public with key air quality and health-related information and tools needed to understand the impacts of wildfire and prescribed fires on air quality and public health. This includes the [AirNow website](#), the [Fire and Smoke Map](#), and the [Smoke-Ready Toolbox](#), which contains resources to educate people about the risks of smoke exposure and actions they can take to protect their health.

EPA has coordinated with land management agencies and state regulatory agencies to find opportunities to apply appropriate wildfire mitigation strategies – including employing prescribed fire.

To address indoor air quality issues during wildfire smoke events, EPA plans to

- Produce a video demonstrating how to set up a “clean room” to reduce smoke exposure at home, which will illustrate the steps described on our [Create a Clean Room](#) webpage.
- Continue to participate in an American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineer (ASHRAE) committee tasked with developing a guideline for “Protecting Building Occupants from Smoke During Wildfire and Prescribed Burn Events,” which is expected to be completed in 2022. More information about the purpose and scope of the proposed guideline can be found on the ASHRAE Titles, Purposes and Scopes webpage under GPC 44P.
- Update and create new factsheets associated with [Wildfire Smoke: A Guide for Public Health Officials](#).

Children and pregnant people are particularly at risk to health consequences of exposure to wildfire smoke. Because these groups are particularly vulnerable, EPA and other stakeholders recently held a workshop addressing the topic of children’s health and wildfire smoke, which identified proposed recommendations for reducing children’s exposure to smoke. Once finalized, these recommendations will be made available to the public on the Wildfire Guide Post-Publication Updates webpage on AirNow.gov. The meeting organizers and workshop participants are considering how to share and implement the recommendations during the 2021 wildfire season and beyond.

COORDINATION OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS

Previous packages have included considerable amounts of money that can be used for infrastructure. I fought hard to make broadband, water, and sewer eligible expenses for communities that don't have major outstanding COVID expenses. That represents \$350 billion for state and local assistance, as well as an additional \$10 billion for critical capital projects like broadband. I can tell you from talking to many of these city and county officials over the past few months that they are ecstatic about these funds. It's the first time they have control of their future in their own hands. At the same time, we need to make sure that we are making smart investments with these funds. The President's plan includes \$111 billion for water infrastructure as well as \$100 billion for broadband. Taken together, that's more than half a trillion dollars toward some of our most pressing infrastructure needs.

Question: How much funding has been provided in previous coronavirus relief packages for infrastructure?

Answer: EPA did not receive any infrastructure funding as part of the CARES Act (Pub. L. 116-136). The American Rescue Plan of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-2) provided EPA with \$100 million in funding to address air pollution and the disparate health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The appropriators gave EPA the flexibility to use some of these resources for infrastructure-oriented state and local assistance grants.

The American Rescue Plan also provided \$350 billion in the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and bring back jobs. These funds can be used to make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. Finally, the American Rescue Plan provides \$10 billion for critical capital projects that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring; this includes broadband infrastructure, connectivity devices and equipment, critical community hubs, and other capital assets.

Question: How are you going to build on the funding we have already provided in an infrastructure bill?

Answer: The American Rescue Plan and the American Jobs Plan together are investments in America that, with the agency's FY 2022 President's Budget request, will create millions of jobs, rebuild our country's infrastructure, address environmental justice and tackle the climate crisis. The American Rescue Plan, as a first step, provides \$100 million for the EPA to advance

environmental justice and help states, tribes, and localities improve air quality for their communities. Per the legislative text, EPA will use the funds to address health outcome disparities from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic and disproportionate environmental or public health risks in minority populations or low-income populations

Building on these environmental justice and air quality projects, the American Jobs Plan includes an \$111 billion investment to help rebuild the nation's aging water infrastructure. This investment aims to replace 100 percent of the nation's lead pipes and service lines, upgrade and modernize drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, tackle new contaminants, and support water infrastructure and resiliency across rural America. The Plan also includes \$5 billion for the remediation and redevelopment of Brownfields and Superfund sites. This investment will spur the cleanup of critical infrastructure in distressed and disadvantaged communities and turn idle property into new hubs of economic growth.

EPA's FY 2022 President's Budget provides the foundation for successful implementation of the American Rescue Plan and the American Jobs Plan projects. The Budget accelerates job-creating water infrastructure improvements, elevates environmental justice across the agency, and increases support for science.

Question: How are you going to coordinate with local communities, states, and other agencies to ensure that this funding addresses our long-term needs?

Answer: Ensuring federal resources are dedicated to addressing communities' long-term needs is central to EPA's shared environmental responsibilities with our state and local community partners. Through the agency's Regional Offices, the Local Government Advisory Committee, and other forums, EPA is committed to regular and ongoing engagement with states, tribes, and local governments across the country who know their communities better than the federal government ever could. EPA is committed to maintaining and enhancing these open lines of communication, working collaboratively across all levels of government, and working directly with local communities to ensure funds are provided to priority projects that meet both short-term and long-term infrastructure challenges.

MINDEN, WV

The President's Infrastructure Plan calls for a \$5 billion investment in brownfield and superfund site remediation throughout the country. Since 1984, the EPA has designated Minden, WV, as a superfund site after an industrial plant polluted the town with PCBs. This site has had a devastating impact on my constituents, and in 2019, after years and years of urging, the EPA finally added Minden to its National Priorities List (NPL). I appreciate the EPA's efforts to assist this community, but the residents of Minden are in desperate need of additional help. Members of the public have expressed concerns about the EPA's data collection and research processes, as well as their dissatisfaction with the status quo, which makes them feel vulnerable in their own neighborhood.

Question: How will the Environmental Justice offices within your agencies collaborate and incorporate outreach to different types of stakeholders that live in and represent communities like Minden?

Answer: EPA has a long and collaborative working relationship with West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's (WVDEP's) Environmental Justice program and will continue to advise, support, and provide training as they advance environmental justice for all West Virginians.

I understand that the community has many concerns about the cleanup process. In Minden, EPA's site team developed a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to facilitate dialogue between the community and EPA to encourage dynamic participation throughout the cleanup process. The CIP is a site-specific resource for EPA staff, state and local partners, and the community that provides general Superfund program information, describes the site and impacted community, identifies and assesses community needs, concerns, and expectations, and shares planned participation activities and communication options. As part of the CIP development, EPA incorporated information from the agency's environmental justice screening tool to provide additional information about the community. EPA is using information from community interviews, the various agency environmental justice tools, and our work with WVDEP to target outreach to ensure community members can meaningfully participate in the Superfund process, consistent with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). EPA will follow up with your office to better understand the concerns of the community about the data collection and research process.

Question: Will this include state & local government, civic organizations, trade organizations, and technical professionals representing affected communities?

Answer: Yes, state and local government, civic and trade organizations, and technical professionals representing affected communities are very important to advancing the site work. To ensure their involvement, the EPA Site Team has monthly coordination meetings with the WVDEP to discuss progress and the schedule for the ongoing remedial

investigation and site activities. The Site Team consistently offers to facilitate and provide the community with resources for forming a Community Advisory Group and applying for a technical assistance grant. EPA reiterated this recently in an April 2021 letter to an attorney representing various community members. Additionally, EPA has reached out to local governments to facilitate discussions on grant applications and attended a public meeting related to the sewer line upgrade project hosted by the City of Oak Hill.

Question: What concrete steps can we take in the coming weeks and months to show these families that help is finally on the way?

Answer: EPA strives to maintain transparent and frequent communication and an open dialogue with the Minden community. The January 2021 virtual public meeting, which covered the Remedial Investigation Phase 1 sampling results and plans for Phase 2 sampling, was well attended, and the community asked thoughtful and detailed questions. EPA answered each question and received input on Phase 2 sample locations from several community members. The Site Team discussed the input with community members, and the Remedial Project Manager visited the site and had discussions with community members in March 2021. The community receives monthly updates on status, progress, and key events.

EPA is finalizing workplans and sampling locations for Phase 2 remedial investigation sampling. EPA, WVDEP, and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are working expeditiously to begin the next phase of field work sampling. The Site Team expects to approve the field sampling plan, including sample locations, over the next 45 days and begin sampling in July 2021. EPA will develop and share a fact sheet with proposed locations and seek final community input prior to beginning field work.¹

¹ Proposed sample locations will be posted to the public site profile page at <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/shaffer>.

CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND

Question: The Clean Water State Revolving Fund is an incredibly important funding mechanism that provides low-interest loans to states to finance improvements for wastewater infrastructure. This is crucial for mitigating nutrient loads and preventing waste from entering our waterways. Unfortunately, the formula by which these funds are allotted to the states has not significantly changed since 1987, meaning that states receive funds largely based on outdated needs, and the populations that states had in 1987. This reality largely disadvantages states whose populations and water infrastructure needs have grown since 1987. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, on the other hand, takes current need and population into account.

- a. Does the Administration believe the Clean Water State Revolving Fund allotment formula should reflect the actual needs of each state?
- b. Does the Administration support a modernization of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund allotment formula to account for the population growth that many states have seen since 1987?
- c. Will you commit to supporting a modernization of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund allotment formula to more closely reflect the method for allotment of funds under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, so that the Clean Water allotment better addresses wastewater infrastructure needs?
- d. As the Clean Watersheds Needs Survey is in need of reform, would you support an interim allotment formula based on population to better address wastewater need while a new formula based on a reformed needs survey is in development?

Answer: In May 2016, EPA produced a “Review of the Allotment of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)” for Congress in accordance with section 5005 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014. To develop the report, EPA reviewed the adequacy of the current CWSRF allotment formula and concluded that the current allotment formula was inadequate because most states do not receive appropriated funds in proportion to their reported needs.

In addition, the report also provided several possible options for updating the allotment formula by incorporating a variety of factors such as needs, population, water quality impairment, and underlying CWSRF performance. The report also explored ways Congress could implement policy priorities using a set-aside within the appropriation (e.g., ability to pay set-aside). Finally, EPA recommended that any future CWSRF allotment formula be updated periodically to reflect changes more adequately over time. EPA looks forward to providing technical assistance to Congress as it considers legislative changes for the current allotment formula.